(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that reservations under this scheme can now be obtained two months in advance against the payment of a premium;

(d) if so, the rationale for such provisions in the scheme; and

(e) what steps are being taken to ensure that the seats are made available to passengers traveling in emergency?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) and (b) The Tatkal reservation system has been reviewed from time to time and the following modification has been made in this scheme recently:—

With a view to improve Tatkal utilization in those trains in which the utilization of Tatkal accommodation is less than 50% in sleeper class on an average for the whole financial year and to save the botheration of general wait listed passengers to go to reservation counter again to book berths under Tatkal scheme, instructions have been issued to Zonal Railways that wait listed passengers of such trains should be given an opportunity to opt for booking under Tatkal Quota (upto 50% of total Tatkal quota) at the time of buying their waitlist ticket itself. This scheme has been introduced on an experimental basis for a period of six months.

(c) No, Sir. The reservations under the above mentioned scheme will be confirmed only five days in advance excluding the day of journey.

(d) The scheme has been introduced to save the botheration of general wait listed passengers to go to reservation counter again to book berths under Tatkal scheme and also to optimize the utilisation of Tatkal berths.

(e) The scheme is not likely to affect the normal availability of Tatkal berths as the occupation level of Tatkal quota in trains covered under the scheme is below 50% and only 50% of Tatkal quota has been earmarked for waitlist passengers.

Change in the route of trains

†*324. SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Jharkhand has expressed its displeasure by objecting to the change in the route of different trains or their cancellation by Railways without taking the State Government into confidence, in the name of 'Bandh' of Maoists in the State;

(b) the basis of decision of cancelling of trains of changing their routes; and

(c) at which level is the decision taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) The Government of Jharkhand had requested Railway authorities to desist from cancellation/diversion of trains on considerations of law and order without prior consultation with State Government officials whenever Bandhs are called by Left Wing Extremists.

(b) and (c) Based on review of threat perceptions that could possibly endanger life of passengers, Railway personnel and Railway property, General Managers of Zonal Railways

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

covering the State of Jharkhand have taken precautionary measures in the past to cancel/ divert/reschedule trains that are suspected to be vulnerable from attacks by Left Wing Extremists.

Forceful occupation of seats in trains by political workers

†*325. SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the workers of various political parties freely travel in the trains without tickets to take part in the rallies being organized by the concerned parties;

(b) whether it is also a fact that these workers forcibly occupy the seats and berths of the passengers traveling on valid tickets and the railway administration does not provide any help to the passengers; and

(c) if so, the action being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) to (c) Some cases of workers of political parties traveling without tickets in trains in large numbers to participate in rallies organized by their respective political parties do come to notice. However, all out efforts are made by the ticket checking and security staff to curb entry of such unauthorized passengers in coaches. Regular *bona fide* passengers are provided necessary help in such situations including refund of full fares in cases when they do not want to travel. As a preventive measure, special trains are run to avoid such rally participants overcrowding the regular trains.

Steel plants in Jharkhand

*330. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the details of MoUs signed for setting up of steel plants in the State of Jharkhand during the last two years and how many projects have commenced, so far, project-wise;

(b) whether the present or proposed New National Mineral Policy is not conducive to setting up of steel plants in the States, as mining lease/iron ore blocks are not allotted on time to the manufacturers; and

(c) what steps Government proposes to take to ensure that steel production does not suffer on account of non-availability of iron ore/iron ore blocks?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) The details of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by various steel producers with Government of Jharkhand during the last two years and the status of each project is enclosed as Statement (*See* below).

(b) National Mineral Policy 2007 is under consideration of the Government. The allocation of iron ore is governed under Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act) read with rule 35 of the Mineral Concession Rules, 1960 providing for end use of minerals. Under this act, the concerned State Government examines and recommends the applications for mining lease under Section 11(3) of the MMDR Act, 1957. Rule 63 A of MC Rules 1960 also provides for a time-frame to dispose of the complete applications for mining lease. In case of delay, the same has to be explained in writing.

(c) An Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) has been constituted to co-ordinate and monitor issues concerning major steel investments in the country which also includes the problems relating to availability of Iron Ore.

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